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THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE YUGO-SLAVS*

By MILIVOY S. STANOYEVICH

The homeland occupied by the Slav race before the great migration of nations appears to have been the basins of the Vistula, Pripet, and Dniester. From this seat, in the period of the third to the seventh centuries, the Slavs began to migrate and spread in all directions, towards the Baltic, towards the lower Dnieper, and towards the Danube, i. e. into the Balkan Peninsula. From the tribes moving towards the lower Danube originated the Serbians, Croats, and Slovenes, known today under one name, the Yugo-Slavs, or Southern Slavs.

INVASION OF THE BALKAN PENINSULA

The exact time when the Southern Slavs began to penetrate into the Balkans is not known to a certainty. According to the Russian chronicle of Pseudo-Nestor, there were, at the time of the Trajan conquests, Slavs in Dacia; but the Volkhi or Vlakhi (i. e. Romance speakers) had conquered and driven some of them to the Danube and some to the Vistula. The truth of this may be inferred from the vestiges of bad repute which the name of Trajan has left in Slavonic tradition. In any case we cannot say that the Slavs occupied a large part of the Balkan Peninsula before the beginning of the sixth century, when they appear in Byzantine history as a new terror. By 584 they had overrun almost all of Greece and were the most western neighbors of the Eastern Empire. In a book on military art, "Strategica," ascribed to Emperor Maurice, directions were given for dealing with the Slavs,¹ and Emperor Leo set forth his theory of the military principles to be used against them in his "Tactics."

By the end of the seventh century the Southern Slavs were permanently settled throughout the whole of the Balkan Peninsula. On the extreme west lived the Slovenes (Slovenci), who occupied the regions now known as Carniola (Krayina, Krain), Carinthia (Khorutania, Korushko), and Styria (Stayersko, Steiermark). On the east of the Slovenes lived the Croats, who came from the northern slopes of the Carpathians (hence the names Carpati, Horvati, Hrvati). They extended their territory far beyond the limits of modern Croatia and included parts of Bosnia and the Adriatic coast, where was nurtured a hardy race of sailors, equally fitted

* The author in this paper does not include the Bulgarians among the Yugo-Slavs. While they are generally considered as belonging ethnically to the group (see e. g. Jovan Cvijić [Jovan Tsviyity]: The Geographical Distribution of the Balkan Peoples. *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 5, 1918, pp. 345-361; reference on p. 355), the present political antagonism between the Serbs and the Bulgarians and the limitation of the proposed Yugo-Slav state to the Serbo-Croats and Slovenes may foreshadow a gradual restriction in the future of the term "Yugo-Slav" to the western branch of the Southern Slavs.—For names of geographical features consult the ethnographic map of the Balkan Peninsula accompanying the paper by Cvijić cited above.—EDIT. NOTE.

¹ See C. Yirechek: *Istoriya Srba* (History of the Serbians), Bk. 2, Ch. 1, Belgrade, 1911.

for fishing, commerce, or warfare. The eastern division of the great Slavic migratory horde was formed by the Serbs (Serboi or Sirbi, as the Byzantine historians called them). They colonized the land between the Isker River and the Adriatic coast, including Serbia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Montenegro, northern Macedonia, Slavonia, the Bachka, and the Banat.

RACIAL UNITY OF THE SOUTHERN SLAVS²

Writers who describe the Southern Slavs recognize that, although they are divided into three nationalities, they are closely akin and form one compact race. Their dialects shade into one another, and there is no trace of great influence by other Slavonic groups. The Southern Slavs were cut off from the Western and Eastern Slavs by the foundation in the sixth century of the Avar kingdom in Pannonia (now Slavonia) and, after its destruction in the seventh century, by the spread of the Germans south-eastwards and finally by the incursion of another Asiatic horde, that of the Magyars, who have maintained themselves in the midst of the Slavs for a thousand years. Their conquests were made chiefly at the expense of the Slovenes and the Slovaks, from whom they borrowed many words in forms which have now disappeared. On the border of the large area between the Tyrolean Alps on the west and the Balkans on the east the Yugo-Slavs came into contact with the old Illyrians, Romans, Greeks, and Vlachs.³ The mixture with these nations in the course of centuries has somewhat modified the real Slavonic type. There are now to be found among the Southern Slavs more of the Roman and Greek dark eyes than of the gray eyes characteristic of the pure Slavs. The handsomest types of all the Southern Slavs are to be found in the region between the Neretva and Timok Rivers.

THE THREE TYPES

The latest researches have divided the Southern Slavs into three different groups or characteristic types. These are: the Dinaric, the Macedonian, and the Pannonic types. The Dinaric type is found generally in the region of Istria, Croatia, Dalmatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, and northern Serbia. The Macedonian type occupies southern Serbia and northern Macedonia. In the Pannonic type one may count the people of Carniola, Slavonia, the Bachka, and the Banat. Within these three main types should be also included some subvarieties, of which we shall speak later.

The Dinaric Type

INDIVIDUALITY

The Dinarics are easily marked out from the other types. They are the typical western Yugo-Slavs, who have kept their national feelings quite

² See also Jovan Cvijić: *Unité ethnique et nationale des Yougoslaves*, *Scientia*, Vol. 23, 1918, pp. 455-463.

—EDIT. NOTE.

³ See: *Jugoslavia, A New European State*, *The Century Magazine*, March, 1918, pp. 687-692, New York.

untouched by foreign influences. Although the people of this type have been partitioned by neighboring powers, they have maintained their individuality in spite of all outside interference. The most prominent marks of the mental life of this type are versatile wit, keen intelligence, extreme sensibility, and abundance of intellectual power. These people usually follow their inspirations, caring little for material considerations. An appeal made to their sense of honor or their ideal of liberty and justice brings a quick response. They manifest a vivid desire to live, to develop, to make a success of their careers, and to be worthy representatives of their race.

THE "ZADRUGA"

A most typical sign of Southern Slav social life is the custom known as the *zadruga*. This is a community of 20 to 80 members knit together by ties of blood and living adjacent to each other. The *zadruga* dates from a very early period, perhaps from the time the Yugo-Slavs came to the Balkans. As the primitive Dinaric population settled in an isolated and mountainous region, this method of life probably owed its origin and maintenance to the simple human necessity for companionship. Under Turkish dominion it grew and expanded because the Turks demanded toll from every house, and the peasants by living in *zadruga* style could include many homes under a single roof, and thus pay but one tax for all. Being composed of a greater number of members, the *zadruga* also received more respect from national enemies.⁴ Although the *zadruga* is gradually dying out, it is nevertheless to be found more often in the Dinaric regions than in any of the other parts of Yugo-Slavia.

THE "SLAVA"

Attached as are the Yugo-Slavs to their *zadruga*, they are no less reverential of their ancestors, especially in Montenegro and Serbia. Here more than anywhere else in Yugo-Slavia ancient family names are passed on from generation to generation. Family genealogies are considered very precious. Also the feast of the patron saint, the *slava*, receives much attention, ranking after Christmas and Easter as the most important day of the year. A family not blessed with a male heir is considered quite humiliated, and when one says: "*Nyegova se kutya ugasila*" (his house is extinguished), it means that the last male has died and the ancestral line is ended. A strong feeling for tradition is also to be noted. From Rieka in Croatia to Kotor in Dalmatia the most important facts of local history are handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth.⁵

⁴ See: *Obichayi Naroda Srpskoga* (The Customs of the Serbian People), edited by the Serbian Academy of Science, Vols. 1 and 2, Belgrade, 1907-08.

⁵ See: *Zbornik za Narodni Zhivot i Obichaye Yuzhnikh Slavena* (A Collection of the National Usages and Customs of the Southern Slays), edit. by the Yugo-Slav Academy of Science, Vol. 8, Zagreb, 1903.

SUBVARIETIES OF THE DINARIC TYPE

The subvarieties of the Dinaric type are those of the Shumadia, Bosnia, and Hertsegovina. The Shumadia variety occupies almost all of Serbia tributary to the Morava River and is composed of old ethnic groups made up of immigrants from the west and south. These strong and virile Shumadian (forest) peasants adapted their mental characteristics to the new geographical and social environment and, when the Turkish Empire in the beginning of the nineteenth century began to decay, were among the first insurgents to throw off its yoke and proclaim an independent state. Democratic sentiment is more developed among the people of this subvariety than among any other Yugo-Slav type. Like the whole type, however, the Shumadians show a remarkable inclination toward science, literature, and art. From this region came the grand figure of Vuk Karadzhity, the founder of modern Serbian literature.

The Bosnian is distinguished by a certain languor of speech and action, and the Hertsegovinian (Era) by his trickery. Their physical constitution is massive and their stature tall. With these physical traits there goes the mental accompaniment of tranquility and taciturnity. They are overprolific, and, because of the working out of the Malthusian law, many of them are forced, like their neighbors the Dalmatians, to emigrate to foreign parts, especially the United States.⁶

The Macedonian Type

DOMINANT TRAIT

The Macedonian type has had less of an evolution than the Dinaric, and it lacks individuality. There are archaic customs to be found in the region of the Macedonian type, something of Old Slavic, ancient Balkan, and Turco-Byzantine. The tendency towards realism is the dominant trait of this type.

The original tribes of this region were at the beginning of the Middle Ages subjected to a Byzantine influence which considerably modified them. After the dissolution of the Byzantine Empire the *zadruga* persisted among the Macedonians, and today one sees these family groupings in the region of Kossovo and the Metohiya, as well as in the belt of land occupied by the Shops on the border of Bulgaria. Though both the *zadruga* and the *slava* are to be found among the Shops, these institutions soon disappear as one approaches the Isker River. The *zadruga* in all these regions is not so marked in type as it is in the Dinaric confines; less warmth and intimacy are felt among its members.

ARCHAIC CHARACTER

The Macedonian type has not mixed with the Pannonic or Dinaric, and it lacks the deep national consciousness of the latter. History is crystallized

⁶ See: Naselya Srpskikh Zemalya (Population of Serbian Lands), edit. by Serbian Academy of Science. Bk. 6, Belgrade, 1909.

in traditions, sentiments, and national tendencies. It is as if the generations had only transmitted a physical inheritance. The soul has ever remained the soul of the ancient Slav. Even the language has been practically stationary. While the Dinaric type has abandoned many old forms for new ones, the Macedonian has kept its archaic mold. Yet, although it has retained most of its old words and linguistic forms, it has not become entirely petrified, for some foreign elements have crept in. The people preserve their old ways. Women are extremely backward, keeping to their old-fashioned costumes, remarkable for rich ornamentation. If one were to stand in the midst of a crowd of Yugo-Slavs, he would have no difficulty in detecting the man of Macedonian type by his exterior as well as by the archaic traits of his language and mentality. He is a vigorous example of basic Slavic character, less contaminated by recent foreign influences and ethnic assimilation than the Dinaric or Pannonic types. Remnants of ancient Byzantine civilization emerge now and then, sometimes mixed with Turco-Oriental peculiarities.

The region occupied by the Macedonian type is the basin of the Southern Morava and the Vardar Rivers, which was the portion of the peninsula most completely submerged by Byzantine domination. Longer than any other section this region remained during the Middle Ages under the direct sway of Constantinople. The principal longitudinal routes traversed this province, and contiguity to Saloniki and Constantinople made itself felt. Many cities of Macedonia, for instance Seres, Voden, Bitolia, and Okhrida, were strongly Islamized. Finally, these regions were longest cut off from contact with Western civilization and culture, owing to the strictness of Turkish surveillance.⁷

SUBVARIETIES OF THE MACEDONIAN TYPE

The subvarieties of the Macedonian type are the Shops and Torlaks. The domicile of these varieties is found in the basins of the Timok, Nishava, and Isker Rivers. "Torlak" means a man who speaks neither good Bulgarian nor good Serbian, and the name "Shop" signifies a rustic. Both these ethnic groups were influenced to a lesser degree by Byzantine civilization than were the southern Macedonians. They preserved their patriarchal institutions longer than did the Dinarics and still celebrate the *slava* like the rest of the Serbians. Being very industrious, they know how to utilize their savings. When they can find no employment in their sterile and mountainous country they emigrate to Rumania or to North or South America. Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria, happens to be situated in the heart of the region occupied by these subvarieties. Consequently many Shops and Torlaks were Bulgarized, especially those who did not move over to Serbian lands. Those who emigrated to Serbia lost their Bulgarian character and are regarded as pure Serbians.⁸

⁷ See: Etnoloshka Gradya i Rasprave (Ethnological Materials and Researches), edit. by Serbian Academy of Science, Belgrade, 1910.

⁸ Same work as cited in footnote 6, Bk. 11, Belgrade, 1912.

The Pannonic Type

TERRITORY OCCUPIED

According to the researches of the Serbian geographer, Jovan Cvijić,⁹ the area inhabited by the Pannonic type is situated north of the Save and Danube Rivers, in the old province of Pannonia. Roughly speaking it includes the Pannonic plain to the east and a part of the Dinaric Alps to the west. From an economic standpoint there are three different regions occupied by the Pannonic Slavs. On the east are Syrmia, the Bachka, and the Banat, territory completely agricultural. Slavonia and a part of Croatia are given over to agriculture and forestry, especially the district of Croatian Zagorye.¹⁰ The lands of the Slovenes belong to the third economic division, where industry, particularly the mining of coal and mercury, is more developed than in either of the former regions.

ORIGIN AND CHARACTER

The story of how the Slavs came to the Pannonic regions is told in the pilgrimage of the Serbian patriarch Arsen III, who, escaping before the on-coming Turks, left southern Serbia accompanied by 30,000 retreating Serb families and fled along the valley of the Morava, over the Save and Danube, to the fertile plains of southern Hungary. There they settled, having been promised land and other privileges in return for their pledge of protection to the Austrian Empire in case of further attacks by the Turks.¹¹

The population of the Pannonic region as a whole has been influenced by various tides of immigration. Syrmia, the Bachka, and the Banat in their patriarchal life resemble the Macedonian type. Traces of ancient Balkan civilization may be found there; while the people of Slavonia, Syrmia, and Carniola, in their mentality reflect their contact with the Dinaric type. It has been proved that people living on plains have a spirit less alert than mountaineers. Such is the case with the Pannonics, who as a rule are a farming class and in disposition are even-tempered and emotionally static.

THE CROATS AND SLOVENES

The Croats and Slovenes are the representatives of Central European civilization among the Yugo-Slavs. The Slovenes are known as great organizers of industry and business enterprises in general. This quality was strengthened in the economic struggle against their northern and western neighbors.¹² The Croats are enthusiasts, poets, and idealists. The founders of Yugo-Slavism were the Croatian patriots, Lyudevit Gay and

⁹ Jovan Cvijić: *La Péninsule Balkanique: Géographie Humaine*, Part V, Chs. 16-18, Paris, 1918.

¹⁰ Transmontana, "beyond the woods," i. e. from Slavonia.

¹¹ See H. W. V. Temperley: *History of Serbia*, London, 1917.

¹² See Bogumil Voshnyak: *A Bulwark Against Germany*, New York, 1919.

Bishop Strosmayer. Their educational institutions in Zagreb attract the youth from all Yugo-Slav lands, as does the Paris Sorbonne the youth of the world.

Conclusion

Among the three Yugo-Slav types, Dinaric, Macedonian, and Pannonic, there are some linguistic and ethnographic differences. But aside from these insignificant variations in speech and manners, their mental qualities are practically the same, whether found in Macedonia, Istria, or Slavonia. In all these three Yugo-Slav groups there prevails a common character of subtleness of thought which causes them to perceive the most delicate nuances of feeling and to express them in an artistic manner. Furthermore there is a deep tenderness lying at the bottom of the composite Yugo-Slav soul. These sentiments are so vivid that very often in moments of passion they break out into intolerance and result in political or partisan combats. The Yugo-Slavs are characterized in general by their rich imagination, their capacity for enthusiasm, and their national idealism. In spite of innumerable battles with the Turks in former times, and with Germans and Hungarians more recently, they have been neither destroyed nor denationalized. On the contrary, their common sufferings and their lofty idealism have brought them together and made of them not only one race, but one state and one nation.